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ABSTRACT

This final performance report for the Loudoun County Public Library literacy project begins with a section that provides quantitative data. The next section compares actual accomplishments to the major project objective: to create a non-threatening learning environment at the Transitional Housing Center (THC), a residential homeless shelter. Proposed and actual expenditures are compared. Activities undertaken are described, including: (1) the organization of the Success Center, a literacy center with the purpose of providing adult literacy resources, one-on-one tutoring, and computer-assisted instruction to THC residents; (2) advantages of computer-assisted instruction, including the value of computer skills in the job market, privacy, individualization, and control of learning; (3) computer software used; and (4) celebrations and recognition events. The role of the library is discussed; the contributions of THC and volunteers are summarized; and the impact of the project is considered. Attachments include a Transitional Housing Program brochure, newspaper clippings, the Success Center newsletter, and flyers. (MES)

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Loudoun County Public Library, Final Performance Report for Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title VI, Library Literacy Program

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Final Performance Report
LSCA VI Library Literacy Program

Part I:
General Information

1. Name and address of organization receiving grant:
   Loudoun County Public Library
   102 Heritage Way
   Suite 103
   Leesburg, VA 22075

2. Name and telephone number of person preparing this report:
   Linda Holtslander
   (703) 777-0368 V/TTY

3. Grant Number:
   R167A20429-92

4. Grant amount awarded and actual amount expended:
   $25,555 awarded
   $25,555 expended

"The Loudoun County Public Library in Leesburg, Virginia, is extending the library's literacy program to a transitional housing center that serves individuals who have been unable to obtain permanent housing due to unfortunate personal circumstances. The center provides safe and supportive temporary housing and a variety of intensive services to help clients attain social and economic self-sufficiency. The library will establish a staffed on-site learning center and provide one-on-one tutoring, literacy materials, and computer-assisted instruction. The participants will be introduced to the local branch library and will participate in its monthly programs of family storytelling, holiday activities and craft and puppet shows."

From: **Library Literacy Program**
Analysis of Funded Projects 1992

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Part II:
Quantitative Data

1. What is the size of the community served by this project?
   - **between 50,000 - 100,000**

2. What type of project was this?
   - **Basic Literacy**
   - **Computer Assisted**

3. Did you target a particular population?
   - **Homeless**

4. If this project involved tutoring, what tutoring method was used?
   - **Computer Assisted Learning Modules**
   - **Laubach**
   - **LVA's Reading Series**

5. If this project involved tutoring, how was it provided?
   - **one-on-one tutoring**

6.(a) If this project involved tutoring, was the learning progress of the adult literacy students quantitatively measured? **Yes**

Each new adult learner in the center was interviewed by the Success Center coordinator and was asked to complete both an informal reading inventory and a short writing exercise to assess their reading and writing skills. It was during this interview that plans were made to include a computer-assisted literacy program in the clients goals. Among the basic materials utilized in the learning process were the Laubach Skill Books, short stories and "checkups" tests. Supplemental materials included additional books of short stories and the series titled *Focus on Phonics*. Each lesson was designed to include vocabulary and phonic instruction, the reading of a short story, followed by comprehension checks and writing practice. The tutoring experience also consisted of LVA's assisted reading series *Read On!* which incorporated process writing, sight words, decoding skills, and critical thinking

strategies. Software programs contained built in testing procedures which allowed the Success Center coordinator to monitor the progress of the student. While working on computer based literacy activities, students mastered standard business applications like word processing, data base management, spreadsheets and graphics.

6.(b) If this project involved tutoring, were qualitative outcomes of student progress documented?

The Success Center was written into the program goals of those residents where literacy tutoring was determined. The coordinator of the center tracked the progress of the students and prepared detailed reports for the Transitional Housing Center director and the grant project coordinator. These reports described the basic issues surrounding the students progress or lack of improvement e.g. family crisis, new job, as well as significant goals that were achieved by the student. All levels of comprehension were documented, and "awards" that were received were indicated in the weekly progress report. This information was included in the Volunteers of America quarterly report prepared by the Transitional Housing Center and the Virginia State Inspection documentation.

7. During the course of this project were any of the following items produced? If so, attach a copy to each copy of the report.

- **newsletter**
- **brochure**
- **other - Success Center T-Shirt**

8. During the course of this project:
How many adult learners were served? (i.e., individuals who made use of the library's literacy project services in some way)
35
Of those served, how many received direct tutoring service?
27
How many hours of direct tutoring service did they receive?

3,240
How many new volunteer tutors were trained? **3**
How many current volunteer tutors received additional training? **1**
How many volunteer tutors (total) were involved? **5**
How many non-tutor volunteers were recruited? **10**
How many service hours were provided by non-tutors? **20+ hours per week**
How many librarians were oriented to literacy methods, materials, and students? **36** +
How many trainers of tutors were trained? 0

Part III:
Narrative Report

1. PROJECT COMPARISON

The major objective of the project was to create a non-threatening learning environment at the Transitional Housing Center (THC), a homeless shelter, located in Leesburg, Virginia. The first step to meet this objective was the hiring of the "Success Center" Coordinator who was responsible for organizing and administering the center, including teaching students computer usage and overseeing the literacy tutoring process. The THC had various needs that limited the candidate field, e.g. hours of instruction which were best suited to the residents, experience working with diverse populations. In addition they had specific prerequisites to working with the clients at the center. They required an extensive police background check, first aide training and CPR certification. Two complete recruitment cycles were necessary before a qualified candidate was selected. This process delayed the beginning of the project and an extension was requested and granted from the U.S. Department of Education. The individual selected had considerable experience working with the homeless population, extensive teaching experience and was skilled in computer-based education.

The Success Center Coordinator immediately began the process of selecting books, audio cassettes and video cassettes which would support the adult literacy effort. Various materials such as worksheets, assessment sheets and textbooks were acquired and

at the same time the acquisition of the computer, hardware and software was facilitated. With a modem which allowed dial-up access to the Loudoun Public Library's online catalog, the center coordinator began to familiarize herself with supplementary materials that would enhance the clients learning process.

The proposal indicated the library would produce a video which would describe the library facilities, routine functions, services and staff. The Success Center team (library staff and center coordinator) selected not to produce the video, and to move the funding into the budget line for instructional videos. The production of the video had been seen as a resource for breaking down the barrier often associated with library use by the adult new learner, in this case residents of the center were eager to use the library and spent many hours in attendance at various library programs, including children's storytime and seminars on job seeking skills.

2. BUDGET COMPARISON

Salaries and Wages

The $12,480 represents a one-year, 20 hour-per-week "Success Center" Coordinator position at $12 per hour. This amount was adjusted to **$12,669**. Fringe benefits of $1,598 for the Coordinator were adjusted to **$970**.

Equipment

The equipment budget line of **$6,213**, remained the same.

Supplies

The $1039 included cost of a library orientation video and promotional items including design and production. This amount was adjusted to **$1273**.

Library Materials

The original $3,925 provided the following:

textbooks, worksheets, assessment sheets

literacy videos
book-cassettes and high interest/low vocabulary materials
computer software

This line was adjusted to **$4430.**

Other

The budgeted $300 was adjusted to **0.**

Justification
All funding was expended at the conclusion of the grant period and each adjustment was approved. Total adjustments: **$1856.**

3. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

From the **Success Center News**, April 1993:

"The quarter will be ending this week and certificates will be given for all work accomplished. You have done a great job over the last few months. Let's be prepared to cheer each other on and give credit to everyone who has helped us achieve our goals. After supper we will enjoy banana splits together!

Learning to read better is hardly a priority for someone who is confronted with a host of survival issues. About 60 percent of America's homeless lack the basic skills necessary for self-sufficiency or for job training. The purpose of the Success Center was to provide adult literacy resources, one-on-one tutoring, and computer-assisted instruction to the residents of the Transitional Housing Center, a residential homeless shelter. The Success Center was staffed by a Coordinator, who was responsible for organizing and administering the project. Volunteers were used 20 hours per week to assist in tutoring and provide program and computer training support. Various service groups in the community pledged time and resources to the Success Center.

"Edna, a single mother of three young children is receiving literacy instruction by computer at the Success Center. She is acquiring the basic skills of reading, writing, and math while preparing to enter a word-processing training program. Although learning to

read to her children is of paramount importance to her at this time, she eventually wants to enter a clerical career and become self-supporting." Loudoun Times Mirror

The computer-assisted literacy instruction allowed the students working in the Success Center to learn a modern skill that would help them meet the challenges of the changing job market. Other advantages of learning in a computer-assisted environment included:

Privacy: Only the adult and the tutor needed to know the actual level at which the learner was working. Once the adult student learned to work the computer s/he worked independently without anyone's (other than the tutor) knowing the program's level of difficulty.

Individualization: Instruction was tailored to the adult student's needs rather than to those of a group. The tutor individualized not only the pace of learning but also the content and presentation to suit the needs and interests of the student.

Control of learning: The student gradually took control of the learning situation as they became familiar with the computer, and subsequent changes in their attitudes about themselves were observed. Controlling a computer seemed to lead to a sense of empowerment for many of the residents who prior to instruction often felt that they had little control over their own lives.

Each level of accomplishment completed in a specific basic skills instructional software program was documented. Residents were required to pass skill level tests before they could progress on to another level or software program. This often presented a problem to residents that missed lessons and did not practice during the week. The program goals for the individuals living in the center were important to the stability of the resident, only by staying with these goals and attempting to accomplish them could the individual remain at the center as a resident. The THC felt that it was vital that the Success Center be written into the program goals of individuals that were involved in the adult literacy program.

Various software programs were acquired that would supplement students' one-on-one tutoring sessions and allow residents to

practice basic skills in problem areas at their own pace. A strong focus was placed on software programs with job-domain related skills, e.g. *Introduction to the Business Office, Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*. These programs involved the student in processes that improved their literacy abilities and gave them tangible support for learning that would enhance their employability and work towards the goal of independent living. Improved literacy skills had a real impact on the quality of the THC client's lives. Students began to see a clear connection between what they were doing in the center and the everyday events of their lives.

Writing skills were enhanced by the use of *Success with Writing* which allowed the tutor to access the students' file to read journal entries and make comments. Residents of the center were encouraged to participate in a variety of writing activities using the computer, including poetry writing. Writing poems of their own, the adult literacy students began to express feelings, create images and tell stories. By using PageMaker software a group of students and the Success Center Coordinator produced a monthly newsletter that featured stories, poetry, update on the residents activities and what the children were accomplishing in schools.

"We gave the clients the first edition of the Success Center Newsletter. One of the women who has completed PageMaker is the editor. The residents gave her applause and the newsletter was received with enthusiasm. This newsletter is for the purpose of morale building in the community. Success Center Coordinator

Math exercises were the most relevant and helpful when the student was working with actual problems, such as those from the workplace or those related to life skills. The key to motivating the student was to provide appropriate and real problems. Programs that enhanced this process included, *Career Math*, Basic Skills in Math and *Retailing Series*.

"Sharon, who is working on her bookkeeping skills landed an internship at the Women's Resource Center. Everyone is very excited at the center. This kind of good news is wonderful for the residents." Success Center Coordinator.

Numerous software programs were obtained that are made for

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children, e.g. *Math Blaster, Talking Spell It Plus.* While created for the young user these programs were not insulting or childish and proved to be very successful with adults.

"Connie and her 5 year old daughter, Nicole are returning to take advantage of the program even though they have housing now. They share 60 minutes in which Connie is learning bookkeeping and Nicole is sharpening her reading skills. Connie still meets with her literacy tutor twice a week, but that meeting is at the library. The availability of the Success Center to those who have moved out is on the basis of unused hours for residents here. The Program Directors feel that this provides some continuing support for those who have anxiety of leaving the program to live on their own."
Success Center Coordinator

The THC staff, Success Center Coordinator and Loudoun Public Libraries worked in partnership to stress the importance of the accomplishments of the residents. Various celebrations, dinners and picnics were offered that brought together the residents and other members of the community. During the Success Center Cookout, library staff, county government officials and volunteers celebrated the progress of the students. Children were excited to see their mothers recognized for their achievements and success in reaching their goals.

"The Success Center Cookout drew the most participation from residents that any event has ever drawn. People live with so much failure that it is good to get awards for accomplishments. Even landing a job may not provide this kind of reward because of the anxiety about starting a new job and the possibility of failure."
THC Facilities Director

Fifty certificates were awarded to residents during the program, many individuals receiving more than one certificate.

"A reporter from the Loudoun Times Mirror had been asked to cover the event. She said she could only stay for a short time, she ended up staying for the entire award ceremony and lingered to ask many more questions about the Transitional Housing program and the Success Center. She had "warm" feelings for all that we were doing, and she said she had no idea what the programs here

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involved. She admitted she was impressed by what was being accomplished and would help promote the work of the center in any way she could." Success Center Coordinator

To supplement the computer assisted training, the center offered the residents videos that reinforced areas of literacy, job and life skills. *Reading Power,* a highly effective audio/visual program let tutors and learners work together but also was used by students on their own to improve listening, reading and writing skills. Many high-interest, low-level reading materials were offered residents in the program. These book highlighted real life experiences, folktales and unedited selections from well-known works of popular fiction.

A CD-ROM interactive software combined with the hypermedia format (sound, graphic and video images) acted as a surrogate tutor for the residents. With the addition of a modem residents could "Dial Up From Home" into the library online catalog, accessing books and materials and community information through the information and referral data base.

4. LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

The Loudoun Public Library played an important role in the accomplishment of the goals and objectives set forth in the approved grant. Residents of the center who were in a tutoring program came to instruction with many informational needs. Using the books from the library, offered students the opportunity to practice their developing skills on a wide range of reading materials. It also connected new readers to a world of information and ideas outside their immediate circumstances. Tutors involved with the program taught students how to read by developing instructional plans that teach the basic skills students need to master and to become independent readers, linking the process of reading with the particular needs and interest of each student's everyday life. To do this job effectively, tutors introduced their students to the world of knowledge and information-the world of books-available in their public library. Working together with literacy tutors and students the library staff opened up a universe of knowledge to adult new readers. Since the inception of public libraries, librarians have served as readers' advisors, skilled professionals who know the books in their collection and link those books to the patron who

comes to the library seeking information. The library staff that was involved with the project extended this traditional role to the new readers by recommending the materials available in the library to support the literacy program.

Residents of the THC were encouraged to get library cards, borrow books and attend library programs for families and adults. Transportation was provided to the library and parents and children participated in more than 40 events, including the popular Summer Reading Program. Library story hours were particularly effective in bridging the gap between anxiety of using the library and being aware of the rich resources it offered. The student's first visit to the library was very important and the sensitive, trained staff at the facility was prepared to assist the new reader and their families. Family reading at the THC showed a marked increase and residents developed a confidence in selecting books that they could read to their children. Where the library had once been seen as difficult to access, residents were now eager to utilize the services, materials and expertise of the staff.

"I love to go to the library and find books I can read to my children." *THC* resident and adult literacy student

5. PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Success Center was centrally supported by the staff of the Transitional Housing Center. This included the facilities Director, Office Manager, Program Director and the Jobs Counsellor. The immediate day to day functions were overseen by the Center Coordinator, a position funded by the grant. Volunteers were used in many capacities from direct one to one literacy tutoring to computer proficiency, guidance of software selection, and program installation.

"The "Success Center" is one of the best things to happen to our residents. They are all very proud of their accomplishments."
Job Counsellor, THC

Individuals involved with the coordination and planning of the literacy program included:

Les Duvall
Arlington Men's Shelter
1727 N. Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 525-3644
(703) 525-2318 (Fax)

Joyce Wright
Embry Rucker Shelter
11975 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston, VA
(703) 437-1975

6. LIBRARY SUPPORT

The Rust Library located at 380 Old Waterford Road, Leesburg, Virginia provided the majority of services to resident and adult literacy student living at the THC.

7. PROJECT IMPACT

The Federal project allowed the library to expand its literacy efforts to the residents of the Transitional Housing Center. Adult Literacy activities are an identified goal and objective of the Loudoun Public Libraries. The library had previously offered on site children's programs and adult informational workshops to the residents. For three years an ongoing placement of several hundred books, cassettes and videos has been part of the library's commitment to the center. The Success Center heightened awareness of the services offered by the THC, Loudoun Literacy Council and the Loudoun Public Library. Extensive press coverage and interest on the part of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors promoted not only the work of the three agencies but strengthened the necessity of programs with this focus.

CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM.

At the conclusion of the grant cycle the Transitional Housing Center Director left the position to serve in another shelter. Due to the outstanding work accomplished by the individual that was hired to

oversee the Federal project, the directors position was offered to her. This fortunately has allowed for a smoother transition than was anticipated. Loudoun Public Libraries has applied for federal assistance under the LSCA, Title VI, Library Literacy Program for FY 1994 in the amount of $25,928. The funding will go towards continuing and expanding the library's literacy program to the residents of the Transitional Housing Center.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Volunteers of America

Loudoun County, for decades considered an affordable area for homeowners and renters, entered the 80's with an unexpected increase in the homeless population.

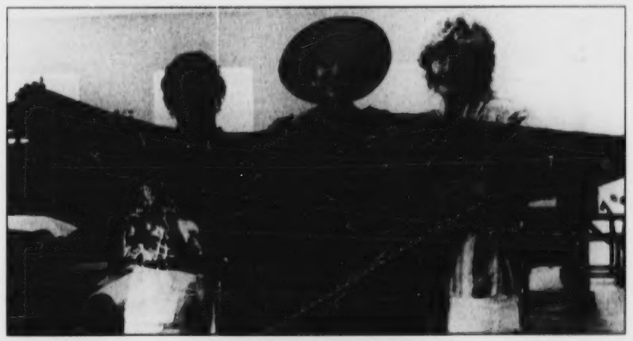
Volunteers reading to one of our younger residents.

County residents or visitors did not see homeless people sleeping on town streets, but social services agencies were meeting families regularly who were living in cars, in temporary shelters, or were in the process of being evicted from their homes.

Various volunteer groups representing local businesses, churches, social service agencies, and health care providers met to address the problem of homelessness in Loudoun County. Their goal was to recommend some type of temporary housing — not a shelter and not permanent housing — that would help certain homeless people become self-supporting. Thus, the idea of a Transitional Housing Program took shape.

Where is the Transitional Housing Program?

Officially opened in May 1991, the Transitional Housing Program is located near the Leesburg Municipal Airport and consists of eight apartment-style living quarters, one large dining area, and office space.



Celebrating the opening of the Success Center, a literacy program provided by Loudoun County's Library Services.

Who Manages This Program and How Does It Work?

Transitional Housing Program is managed by the Volunteers of America (VOA), a human services organization founded in 1896 by Christian social reformers Ballington and Maude Booth. Today, VOA administers 400 human service programs throughout the United States, and is one of the country's largest nonprofit organizations.

How is it Funded?

VOA's Transitional Housing Program is financially supported by the State of Virginia, Loudoun County, and by private donations from organizations and individuals. The operation budget for 1993-1994 is approximately $211,000.

A get-aquainted time at the Program.

Can any Homeless Person Apply to Live at the Program?

Anyone can apply, but only those persons who meet our very specific requirements will be accepted. Most clients are referred by social workers and other professionals. Clients are selected on the basis of their motivation to be employed as well as their willingness to address the problems that led to their homelessness. Persons with ongoing drug, alcohol, or mental health problems are referred to programs that better address their specific needs.

Are There Age Limitations?

No. Clients have ranged in age from newborn to mid-50's.

This program has a single purpose: to teach clients how to personally end their cycle of homelessness. If they are unemployed or marginally employed when they move into the Program, trained staff help them find jobs. This typically involves counseling, resumé preparation, classes for learning or refreshing their skills, transportation, and job placement testing. Clients with children are also responsible for finding and paying for child care. School-age children attend Leesburg public schools.

In an effort to help clients save and mange their money, 30% of each client's wages are set aside in a savings account. The entire amount, less fees, is returned when he or she moves out of the center.

Resident family members help with a newborn.

Is Transitional Housing Successful?

Although this is a new program in Loudoun County, some of our "graduates" have already made great strides toward independent living. Calvin, for example, came to VOA's Transitional Housing Program shortly after it opened. Separated from his wife and facing unemployment, he and his two children had been living in a car in Leesburg. After six months, Calvin's stable job as a school custodian enabled him to secure an apartment for his family. Today he is a proud, tax-paying, self-sufficient citizen.

Anita was employed when marital difficulties and a new baby caused a series of problems that left her homeless. At VOA's Transitional Housing Program, she received the support and guidance she needed to be a responsible parent and become self-supporting. Anita is finishing her studies now and has a promising future, thanks to the helping hand from this program and the Loudoun County community.

The clients who participate in the program are proud, hardworking, and resilient people who have suffered much from the indignity of being homeless. With the support of Loudoun County residents, VOA is dedicated to continue teaching our families here how to attain social and economic self-sufficiency.

Getting ready for a birthday party.

Residents awarded certificates for improving their computer skills.

How Can You Help?

Volunteers are always needed to provide transportation, child care, counseling, and other services. If you or your organization has an idea or talent you'd like to share with our clients, we'd like to hear from you. Donations of office supplies, toiletries, and vehicles are appreciated. We regret that we don't have adequate storage for clothing. Ask for the current wish list. All financial gifts are tax-deductible.

For more information about the Transitional Housing Program or Volunteers of America contact:

The Transitional Housing Program
19520 Meadowview Court
Leesburg, VA 22075
(703) 771-5429

Special thanks to **Colortone Press** *for generously donating this printing.*

Housing Success Center Helps Area Homeless

By Beverly Livesay

A celebration was held June 26 at the Volunteers of America's Transitional Housing Center in Leesburg to celebrate the receipt of grants from the U.S. Department of Education and 7-Eleven stores.

Linda Holtslander, library program coordinator and grant coordinator, said the $25,555 grant from the U.S. Department of Education was provided under Title VI Library Service and Construction Act funds in order to extend the library's efforts to improve literacy among the homeless population.

A $500 grant from 7-Eleven stores was used to purchase a "Hooked on Phonics" computer software program for the children's program.

Receipt of the grants allowed the creation of the Success Center, a program in which the library helps the Transitional Housing Center reach its goal to help the homeless find employment, Holtslander said.

Success Center Director Lyn Harper has been working with adults and children for the last 11 weeks. She awarded 50 certificates of achievement at the ceremony for work already completed in the new program. Many participants received more than one award.

"People took a lot of pride in receiving the certificates," Holtslander said.

Since May 1991, 100 people have been helped by the Transitional Housing Program. They are entitled to live at the center for up to two years, while participating in the program which is to help them become self-sufficient. The idea is to break the cycle of homelessness by looking at the causes that have led to being homeless.

These causes can include work experience, transportation, substance abuse, marital problems, credit history, low self-esteem, lack of a support network and education.

See Flowers, Page A9

(Continued from page A7)

The last three causes are directly related to the Success Center's efforts. Harper's task is to provide adult literacy resources, tutoring, and computer-assisted instruction to improve a person's employability and self-esteem, she said.

Holtslander said the program provides the participants with a feeling of empowerment.

"This is an ideal way for people to extend their learning," she said.

The homey, informal atmosphere of the center may not appear to be a place of work, but much is being accomplished there. Computer-drawn artwork (done by children and adults) graces one long wall. Created on a MacIntosh Kid Pixs program, the projects taught beginners to use the software of a computer and feel comfortable using it.

A quiet reading corner is available and an ample number of books can be spied scattered throughout the center.

Harper makes weekly trips to the library, she said, and on July 6 children started participating in the Library Summer Reading Program and the Pajama Story Time.

Refresher courses are taught in math and spelling in order to keep the children on track for the upcoming school year, Harper said. Classes are also available to help adults earn their Graduate Equivalency Degree.

Les Duvall, transitional housing director, said the grants were significant because they represented a private, not-for-profit agency's success working with a public agency.

Transitional Housing of Loudoun County is at 19520 Meadowview Court in Leesburg (across from the airport) and can be reached by calling (703) 771-5429.

Transitional Housing Center and Loudoun Public Libraries

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SUCCESS CENTER

MEMO

YOUR SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT IN THE SUCCESS CENTER IS:

_____

Appointments for the success center should be considered a standing appointment for which you have enrolled. Your success in the goals you want to accomplish,and the success of this program depend upon consistency of participation.

If emergency or illness prevent you from attending your class, please contact Lyn Harper as soon as possible. You may be able to reschedule your class and Lyn may be able to use your class time for others.

Lyn may be contacted at home 729-5481 or at work each day from 1-5 pm 450-5997

Each person needs to become an authorized MAC or IBM USER by completing the training for the computer and each software package.

Children may not use computers without the guidance of a MAC or IBM authorized person. Older children and youth can use the computers on their own WHEN they have completed the training successfully.

success center news

April 1993 Volume 1, Number 1

SUCCESS CENTER OPENS

May 10

May 10 will be the official starting date for the Success Center. Opportunities for adults and children to brush up on old skills and learn new ones will be available through a computer-based literacy program.

Two computers are now available. The IBM pc operates Word Perfect, Lotus 1-2-3, Dvorak on typing, Virginia View, Playroom, and Schoolmom. IBM's menu driven programs are standard operating equipment in many professional settings.

The Macintosh 11vx is an "icon" or picture driven menu operated by using a "mouse" to point to the selections you want to chose. The MAC currently has a word processor called MacWrite and a desk top publishing program called PageMaker. We have ordered some exciting software programs for children:

KidPix - a graphic art program
New Math Blaster Plus
Talking Spell it Plus
Talking Reader Rabbit
Talking Math Rabbit
Alphabet Blocks - pre-schoolers
Mavis Bacon Teaches Typing
The Oregon Trail

Learning with computers is FUN!

What is literacy? The word reminds me of reading tests where you had only a certain amount of time to read a paragraph, and then you had to answer all those questions at the end. I never could remember what I read under pressure. So I didn't have much success in answering the questions. Generally I would have to go back and reread the material and try desperately to find the answers before the time ran out!

I'd like to propose my own definition of literacy.

To be able to get along in your "people group" with words, numbers and machines.

For example -
Can you speak, read, write, and understand the language of the people of the community?

Can you read signs, instructions, warnings; find information in catalogues and directories; file things alphabetically, fill out applications?

Can you balance a checkbook, open a savings account, compare prices at stores, make change?

Can you use the phone, fax a memo, type a letter, take a photo, program a VCR, operate a CD player, or use a computer?

These are the kinds of skills that make you "literate" or able to function smoothly in society.

Lifetime Learning Line

Governor Salutes Those Who Aid the 'Invisible' Homeless

By Aneeta Brown
Special to The Washington Post

Bill and Mary Haggerty are a busy working couple with four small children and a house in Leesburg. But several times a month they spend time at the county's only short-term residence for homeless families, playing with the children, befriending other parents, working in the office or hosting a party. Last year the Haggertys contributed a combined 750 hours to the Transitional Housing Center in Leesburg.

Lynn Donovan, who has raised three nearly grown children with her husband in Waterford, has spent much of the last year working to set up a meal program in a house in downtown Leesburg, where hungry and homeless people can eat a free hot meal at tables with perky placemats and fresh flowers. In its first two months, the program has served more than 1,300 meals.

For their efforts to reach out to the largely "invisible" homeless of this county, the Haggertys and Lynn Donovan will be honored in Richmond this weekend as three of 29 recipients of Gov. L. Douglas Wilder's gold medal awards for volunteerism.

More than 400 state residents and organizations were nominated for the award this year.

"With a full-time job and four children under 10, believe me, I have plenty to do in my spare time," said Bill Haggerty, a corporate telecommunications manager at AT&T. "But Mary and I want our children to know that every child doesn't have a yard to play in, a houseful of furniture and toys, the chance to take summer vacations and so on. . . . Poverty has a name and a face [for them] now."

In fact, the Transitional Housing Center, with eight apartments available for 18 months to homeless people attending school or holding a job, has a waiting list of eight families, according to Director Les DuVall.

"We've lived in hard times and easy times and know that homelessness can happen to just about anybody if certain conditions exist," Bill Haggerty said.

They had volunteered at an emergency shelter for women and children when they lived in Denver and "they jumped in right away as volunteers" when they arrived here, said Rebecca Sparks, minister of education at St. Francis Catholic Church in Purcellville. Mary Haggerty, who teaches childbirth classes at Loudoun Hospital Center, quickly developed a support group for young mothers, and Bill Haggerty helped organize activities for youngsters.

Last Christmas, Mary Haggerty coordinated a wishing tree that delivered 100 practical Christmas gifts—from socks to a professional eye exam—to center residents. When she learned the center was short of diapers, she donated her paycheck to newborn supplies. Another time she spent $15 and bought every resident a needed can opener.

But what the family enjoys most is hosting birthday parties at the center, Mary Haggerty said. "It's simple. I bake a cake, sometimes we have ice cream, and each person celebrating a birthday receives a small gift. One woman told me afterwards that until that day she had never in her life been given a birthday party."

Like the Haggertys, Lynne Donovan learned that poverty has a name and a face. She discovered that a young man she had hired to do some drywall work was living in his car.

She had teased him one day, asking, "Why do you carry around so much stuff in your car?"

He and his wife had moved to the area from Texas, expecting to find steady work but finding only a construction industry in recession, he told her. After his wife lost her job because of immigration difficulties, their car was the only shelter they could afford, he explained.

Eager to help people like them, Donovan stumbled upon Interfaith Relief Inc., a nonprofit group founded in November 1991 by a handful of area churches that pooled their food closets to give groceries to needy families.

What was really needed, social workers and housing advocates told Donovan, was a daily hot meal program for the county's homeless and hungry.

"A lot of people who lost their jobs were able to make mortgage payments or pay the rent, but simply had no money left for food. It's very difficult for many families to ask for food. . . . My dream was to help find a way to feed hungry people in a nonjudgmental way."

Donovan suggested the hot meal idea to Interfaith Relief and garnered a $5,000 start-up grant for it from the Christmas for the Homeless Foundation.

Two months ago, the Daily Bread dining room opened in a small frame house on South King Street in Leesburg.

Karen Jackson, volunteer publicity director for Interfaith, said that Daily Bread has been a team effort with many players, but that Donovan's willingness to ask community members to help has turned it into a reality. Through Donovan's contacts, a local doctor agreed to examine one dinner guest's broken bones for free, three area churches agreed to pay the monthly rent, and hundreds of people donated furnishings.

Donovan was adamant that Daily Bread, open six nights a week, feel like a home. So new curtains were donated, oil paintings adorn the walls, restaurant-style glassware, china, and silverware are used, a local Girl Scout troop has made cheerful laminated placemats and fresh flowers sometimes show up unexpectedly.

"I've known Lynne for years, and her personality wins people over," said Kevin Malone, who owns the nearby Tuscarora Restaurant. "Last November when Daily Bread was still being renovated, she asked if we could prepare and donate Thanksgiving dinner for a group of homeless people. I knew if Lynne supported the project, it was a good cause." Tuscarora served about 135 guests.

Donovan said her degree in business administration is little help in this work that now consumes her life much like a full-time job. Her experience as a mother of three, ages 15 to 23, is probably more relevant, she said. "If you can survive raising your kids," she smiled, "you probably have tremendous energy and talents to share with others."

And that's all it takes, said Les DuVall, director of the Transitional Housing Center.

"If somebody gave $10 million to [the center] tomorrow, I would still want to have volunteers work with us. Volunteers come with life experiences and resources that they want to share. And you just can't go out and buy that."

But the return on the investment is good too, Mary Haggerty said.

"When we first started working with homeless people in Denver, I think Bill and I thought that it would be our little effort to save the world. Well, we've learned a lot since," she said. "Personally, the people I have met at Transitional Housing have helped me confront my own fears and prejudices about homelessness."

"Mary and I want our children to know that every child doesn't have a yard to play in."
— Bill Haggerty

Bill Haggerty, left, holds daughter Colleen, 9 months, as his wife, Mary, serves Easter bunny cake to Adam Lorton, far right, and son Brendan, 2, to the right of his mother.

PHOTOS BY ANNALISA KRAFT—THE WASHINGTON POST

Lynn Donovan's meal program offers free hot food in a homey setting in a house downtown.

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